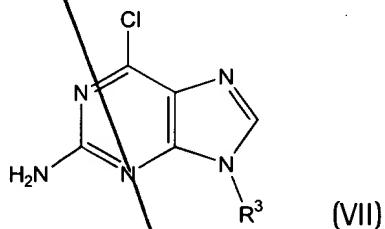


In the Claims:

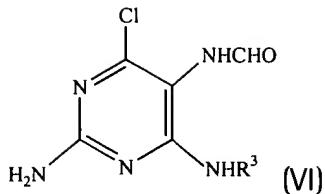
Please cancel claim 5 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

10/15
Claim 9 (Twice amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)

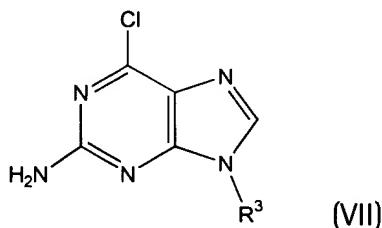


wherein R³ is hydrogen; hydroxyl or a protected hydroxyl; a C₃₋₇ carbocyclic group optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; a C₂₋₈ hydrocarbyl group, wherein carbon atoms may be substituted by one or more heteroatoms such as N, O or S, and wherein such C₂₋₈ hydrocarbyl group may be optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; or a C₄₋₇ heterocyclic group, wherein at least one carbon atom is replaced by a N, O, or S atom and wherein such C₄₋₇ heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, [or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)

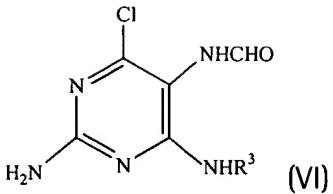


wherein R³ is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond] as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

18. (Amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)

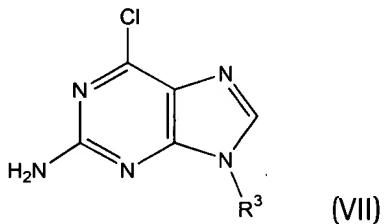


wherein R³ is a C₃₋₇ carbocyclic group optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen, a C₂₋₈ hydrocarbyl group, wherein carbon atoms may be substituted by one or more heteroatoms such as N, O or S and wherein such C₂₋₈ hydrocarbyl group may be optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; or a C₄₋₇ heterocyclic group, wherein at least one carbon atom is replaced by a N, O, or S atom and wherein such C₄₋₇ heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with C₁₋₄alkyl, C₁₋₄alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)

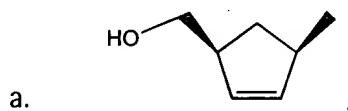


wherein R³ is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] as defined above with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

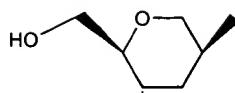
19. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



wherein R³ is selected from:



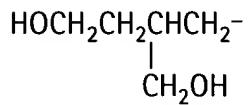
B²



c.

; and

d. (CH₃C(O)OCH₂)₂CHCH₂CH₂-;



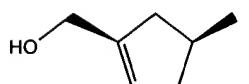
e.

; and

f.

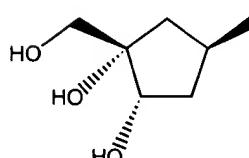
; and

g.

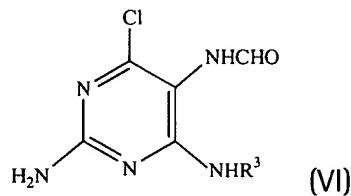


; and

h.

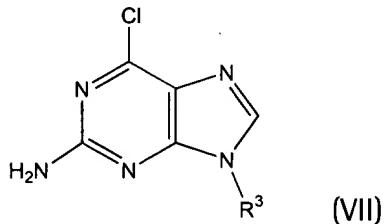


comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)

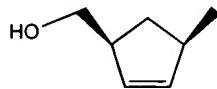


wherein R³ is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] as defined above with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

20. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



wherein R³ is



comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)